

Wəlastəkw River Interim Statement of Cooperation

Among Maliseet Tribal/First Nation Leaders:

**Houlton Band of Maliseets, Madawaska Maliseet First Nation,
Tobique First Nation, Woodstock First Nation, Kingsclear First Nation,
St. Mary's First Nation, Oromocto First Nation, Viger First Nation**

and

**United States Federal Agencies and Canadian Federal Departments:
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs,
United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Army Corps of
Engineers, United States Geological Survey, Fisheries and Oceans Canada,
and Environment and Climate Change Canada**

ON THIS HISTORIC DAY OF MAY 31, 2017, THE MALISEET TRIBAL/FIRST NATION LEADERS INVITE THE ABOVE UNITED STATES FEDERAL AGENCIES AND CANADIAN FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS TO JOIN THEM IN SIGNING THIS INTERIM STATEMENT OF COOPERATION TO AFFIRM THEIR MUTUAL OBJECTIVE TO COOPERATE IN THE RESTORATION OF THE PORTION OF THE WƏLASTƏKW /SAINT JOHN RIVER WATERSHED THAT LIES IN THE STATE OF MAINE AND IN THE PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK, IN THE SPIRIT OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP AND RECONCILIATION WITH THE MALISEET PEOPLE.

Currently, approximately 7,000 Maliseet people live throughout the Wəlastəkw/Saint John River watershed in 8 eight communities in New Brunswick, Maine and Quebec. Nearly 300 years ago, the Maliseet people entered into a treaty relationship with the Crown.

Today these treaties serve as the foundation for the nation-to-nation relationship between the Maliseet First Nation and the Government of Canada. The Maliseets are a federally recognized Indian tribe in the United States, which serves as the basis for the trust relationship between the United States and the Tribe. It is in this long held relationship of peace and friendship that the Maliseet Tribal/First Nation Leaders seek to cooperate with both Governments to address cultural and natural resource sustainability through fish passage, habitat restoration, and ecosystem rehabilitation for the benefit and use of the Maliseet people and their future relations, as well as all people living by the Wəlastəkw/Saint John River and the Bay of Fundy.

The natural passage of alewives, blueback herring, Atlantic salmon, American shad, American eel and other species of anadromous fish have been impeded from migrating by dams on the Wəlastəkw/Saint John River. There have been declines in abundance, and some species are now considered at risk. The closure of the river to salmon fishing for nearly 20 years for conservation reasons in response to declining stocks has led to a diminished food source of the sea-run fish that were once one of the primary food sources of the Maliseet People.

The Maliseet Tribal/First Nations Leaders recall that, since time immemorial, the Maliseet people have maintained an inherent connection to the Wəlastəkw/Saint John River and the natural resources that it supported, and that this connection is foundational to Maliseet customs, language, and culture. Through this Statement of Cooperation, the Maliseet Tribal/First Nation Leaders call upon the above United States Federal Agencies and Canadian Federal Departments to uphold and renew their relationship with the Maliseet people and to focus on cultural and natural resource sustainability of the Wəlastəkw/Saint John River watershed.

This historic cooperation is the result of the respectful government-to-government relationship existing between the Tribes and the Federal Government in the United States, and the renewed nation-to-nation relationship existing between the First Nations and the Government of Canada.

In November 2009, the then-President of the United States released a memorandum to the heads of all Executive Departments and Agencies reaffirming the continued implementation of Executive Order 13175, and reaffirming the government-to-government relationship with federally recognized Indian Tribes in the United States. This relationship has served as the cornerstone in the United States Government's longstanding commitment to strengthening its relationships with the Tribes. The United States is committed to tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and self-government, and it honors this commitment by working with federally recognized Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis.

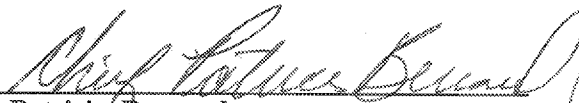
In November of 2015, the Prime Minister of Canada signed ministerial mandate letters to all Ministers of the Government of Canada. In these letters, the Prime Minister indicated that there is no relationship more important to him, and to Canada, than the one with Indigenous People. The mandate letter called for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

The Maliseet Tribal/First Nation Leaders believe that, through the continued cooperation of strong government-to-government and nation-to-nation relationships, the work of restoring and protecting the Wəlastəkw/Saint John River and the Bay of Fundy ecosystem can bring enormous cultural and economic benefits not only to the Maliseet People but also to all people living by the Wəlastəkw/Saint John River and the Bay of Fundy. While realizing that more can be done, the parties celebrate what has already been accomplished to date due to joint efforts between the Maliseet people, Canadian and American governments.

Simply stated, cultural and natural resource sustainability are possible with cooperation and commitment. The Maliseet Tribal/First Nation Leaders, the United States Federal Agencies and Canadian Federal Departments, subject to and in accordance with existing legal authorities, now state their intention to continue working together toward the common goal of restoring sea-run fish to this beautiful River, the watershed and ecosystem they support, and the cultural connection between the Maliseet people and the Wəlastəkw/Saint John River watershed and ecosystem.

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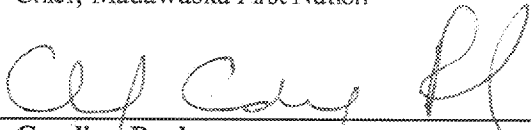
Signatories



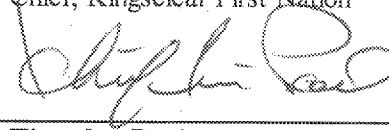
Patricia Bernard
Chief, Madawaska First Nation



Gabriel Atwin
Chief, Kingsclear First Nation



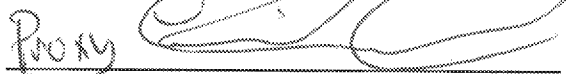
Candice Paul
Chief, St. Mary's First Nation



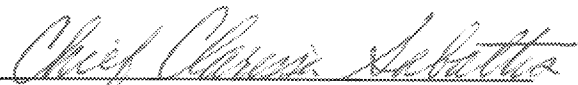
Timothy Paul
Chief, Woodstock First Nation



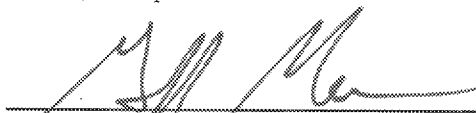
Shelley Sabattis
Chief, Oromocto First Nation



Ross Perley
Chief, Tobique First Nation



Clarissa Sabattis
Chief
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians



I.R. Geoffrey Mercer
Regional Director General
Atlantic & Quebec Regions
Environment and Climate Change Canada



Serge Doucet
Regional Director General
Gulf Region
Fisheries & Oceans Canada



Ken Moraff
Acting Deputy Regional Administrator
Region 1
US Environmental Protection Agency



Christopher J. Barron
Colonel, US Army Corps of Engineers
District Engineer



Wendi Weber
Director, Northeast Region
US Fish & Wildlife Service



Keith Robinson
Director
New England Water Science Center
US Geological Survey



Bruce Maytubby
Director, Eastern Region
Bureau of Indian Affairs
US Department of Interior